

investigation in our House impossible. He should do the right thing and recuse himself, and this House should join the Senate in having a real investigation.

#### CONGRATULATING AND HONORING ANGELINA M. PENNISI STEINER

(Mr. GAETZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GAETZ. Madam Speaker, I come from the State of Florida, where we have many of our citizens who live in nursing homes. Despite the views of some, those residents can live remarkable, productive, and fulfilling lives.

One such resident is Angelina Steiner. Mrs. Steiner lives in the Plant City Senior Center. She shares her talents in weekly poetry readings. She became a member of the Florida Writers Association. In 2014, she published her first book: "Chasing Dreams." Now, her second book: "Beautiful Words Coming My Way" is being published and archived in the Library of Congress.

A loving wife and a mother of four children, Mrs. Steiner is inspired by everyday events. She has the talent to paint beautiful pictures through her poetry, and I am incredibly proud of her.

#### RECOGNIZING SOCIAL SCIENTISTS FROM THE CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

(Mr. LIPINSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the 80 social scientists from the Consortium of Social Science Associations, who are visiting Washington, D.C., today, and to thank them for their hard work keeping our STEM enterprise strong.

They are here to highlight the value of social science research to the Nation, and to support funding for the social, behavioral, and economic sciences in the National Science Foundation budget.

Social science research has provided us with numerous benefits. Some of these include: strengthening cybersecurity by showing us how changes in behavior can eliminate cyber vulnerabilities; making our soldiers safer by working with the Army to improve its cross-cultural training; and saving lives by improving the system of matching kidney donors with patients.

Madam Speaker, we must have strong Federal funding for social science research. Cuts would make America weaker, not greater.

I urge my colleagues to oppose any cuts to social science funding in the NSF budget.

#### PUTTING ACCOUNTABILITY BACK ON THE EPA

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, tonight I rise to commend the House for passing H.R. 1430, what is known as the HONEST Act. This would put more of the onus on to the Environmental Protection Agency, sometimes known as the employment prevention agency, to disclose where they get their science or where they get their reasoning when they are going to make a regulation upon the people that produce in this country.

My own constituents have suffered from that in my district in northern California, where arbitrary rules are put in place without even the opportunity to face their accuser of what kind of science they are using or what kind of reasoning they are using to put a regulation in place that they have to fight, and fight sometimes for many years, in order to have the opportunity just to use their land, just to use their land for planting crops or for grazing or for other things that would help them with their livelihood, with their economy, like they have been using for so many years, even decades, in their families.

The HONEST Act will put accountability back on the EPA to say you have to come forward with reasoning, with logic, and with science that is publicly available and not hidden from the public so that we can see what you are using to regulate the people.

#### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S TIES WITH RUSSIA

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to continue the call for an independent commission to investigate the President's ties with Russia.

Congress has the responsibility to ensure we investigate these matters appropriately. We must provide the American people with answers, transparency, and accountability. We know that there are issues with the House Intelligence Committee on the Republican side, so it is time that we ask for an independent commission to take the lead.

Let's be honest, at the end of the day, you are the company you keep. So far, President Trump's team has included a national security adviser who was paid by Russian companies to appear at Russian events, a former campaign manager who had a multimillion-dollar contract to advance Putin's agenda, and now we have the issues again with the Republican side of the Intelligence Committee to cover up tracks left by the Trump administration.

As we further untangle the web created by Trump and his team, it is clear that some Republicans are fearful of what potential investigations may reveal. The American people deserve answers.

#### BUCKLEY V. VALEO REINTRODUCTION

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution: Expressing the sense of Congress that the Supreme Court misinterpreted the First Amendment to the Constitution in the case of Buckley v. Valeo.

This resolution will restore equal footing to all Americans in our Nation's politics.

The landmark Supreme Court case Buckley v. Valeo was decided over 40 years ago. Then-Justice Byron White called the decision "a mortal danger against which effective preventive and curative steps must be taken."

In the wake of the recent Presidential election where spending approached \$5 billion, we clearly see the influence of big money. That money exerts an inordinate amount of influence over our politics. True to form, it appears to have endowed donors with an unusually high number of Cabinet positions in the Trump administration. Over one-third of President Trump's high-level government posts were awarded to megacampaign donors.

Congress must end the current practice of allowing elections to be bought by the highest bidder. If money equals free speech, then lack of money equals lack of free speech.

We must ensure that our campaigns are reflective of the people's voices. Buckley v. Valeo took away this inviolate First Amendment right from the people, and this resolution is the remedy to restore it.

□ 1715

#### REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.J. RES. 17

Mr. SANFORD. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor from H.J. Res. 17.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### QUESTIONING THE RUSSIAN CONNECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

have five legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, with my colleague PRAMILA JAYAPAL, from the State of Washington, on behalf of the Progressive Caucus, we are taking this Special Order hour to focus on the question of the Russian connection.

This is a matter of utmost seriousness and urgency to the American people because it goes to the question of our national security and the political sovereignty of the American people to engage in democracy on our own without foreign interference, subversion, and sabotage.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS), the distinguished Congresswoman.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Congressman RASKIN for organizing this time, for helping to keep this Congress focused on this extraordinary chain of events that is taking place in our country, and for drawing attention to what should be a credible investigation about the ties between this President and Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin.

Why is this President so focused on complimenting Putin?

Why has he wrapped his arms around him?

Why has he said he is a great President?

Why does he refuse to even talk about the fact that Putin has invaded Crimea?

Why does he refuse to understand what is being said when Putin is charged to be a killer and all of the deaths that are taking place from opponents of his, from people who criticize him?

Well, I think the more we learn about the connections that this President and his allies have, the more these questions are going to become very serious, and it is going to lead us to have to make some big decisions about whether or not this President is fit to lead the United States of America.

I have been deeply concerned about these issues for months. President Trump, throughout his campaign and since his election, has chosen to surround himself with people who have close ties with Russia.

When our intelligence agencies announced their conclusion that Russia interfered in our elections, I called for an investigation focusing on the possibility of collusion between Trump's "Kremlin Klan," that I have dubbed them, and the Russian Government. I introduced H. Con. Res. 15, urging Congress to investigate the possibility of collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign. Investigations should focus on the Kremlin Klan.

Let's talk about some of those allies and folks who are aligned with Trump and with Russia:

Michael Flynn, who was fired from the NSC after lying about discussing sanctions with Russian Ambassador Kislyak.

Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign manager, was a paid lobbyist for Viktor Yanukovich, the pro-Russian politician in Ukraine who fled to Russia in 2014. AP reports Manafort signed a \$10 million contract in 2006, with Russian billionaire and Putin ally Oleg Deripaska, to advance Putin's interest in the United States. The New York Times also reports Manafort tried to hide \$750,000 in payments from a pro-Russian party in Ukraine.

Carter Page, a former Trump campaign adviser, is a consultant to and investor in the Kremlin state-run gas company, Gazprom, and has a direct financial interest in ending American sanctions against the company. He recently revealed that he met with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak, during the 2016 RNC.

And then there is Roger Stone, who has worked in Ukraine. Stone announced, in a speech last summer, that he had spoken to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. Stone also disclosed to the press that he had been exchanging messages with Guccifer 2.0, the Russian hacker that hacked the DNC last summer.

And then-Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross was a business partner of Viktor Vekselberg, a Russian oligarch and Putin ally, in a major financial project involving the Bank of Cyprus.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson signed a multibillion-dollar agreement with Russia in 2011, on behalf of Exxon, for an oil drilling project in the Arctic and is focused on lifting the sanctions.

The New York Times reported that, prior to his resignation, Mike Flynn was delivered a proposal outlining a way for President Trump to lift the Russian sanctions and broker a deal between Russia and Ukraine that also included the public smearing of Ukraine's current President Poroshenko. The deal is being pushed by his opposition in Ukraine. Although Mike Flynn is gone, the proposal remains, along with those pushing it.

Then there is Michael Cohen, the President's personal lawyer, who was involved in developing the document, and who delivered the document.

Then there is Felix H. Sater, a business associate and a former criminal who served time, who reportedly had ties with the Mafia, who helped Mr. Trump scout deals in Russia.

And then there is Andriy Artemenko, a Ukrainian lawmaker trying to rise in a political opposition movement, shaped in part by Mr. Trump's former campaign manager, Paul Manafort.

And of course, there is our Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who was forced to recuse himself from investigations related to the 2016 Presidential campaign, after it was revealed that he met

with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak on two separate occasions during the campaign cycle, information which he failed to disclose during his confirmation hearings. Kislyak is the same Ambassador with whom Mike Flynn discussed U.S. sanctions, and, by the way, he lied about it.

It has now been revealed that Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak met with the following Trump associates: Carter Page, Jeff Sessions, Mike Flynn, and Jared Kushner, in December 2016, in Trump Tower, during the transition. None of these meetings were made public and were only discovered after the press released reports.

Before the press reporting on the meetings above, the Trump administration had repeatedly denied its campaign had contact and communication with Russian officials. The press has noted that the meetings are not unusual but that public concern is heightened because they have all lied about or failed to disclose the meetings.

Deutsche Bank was ordered to pay more than \$600 million in fines, including a \$425 million fine to New York's Department of Financial Services and a \$204 million fine to the U.K.'s Financial Conduct Authority for failing to have adequate money laundering controls in place to prevent a group of corrupt traders from improperly and secretly transferring more than \$10 billion out of Russia. Press reports indicate that the Department of Justice is investigating this matter. Deutsche Bank is Trump's largest lender, lending his companies an estimated \$360 million.

As to oil and gas, President Trump signed last month a bill striking section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act which required Big Oil companies to disclose the money they pay to foreign governments to drill on their lands. Striking section 1504 will allow Big Oil companies like ExxonMobil to conduct secretive dealings with corrupt parties, such as Vladimir Putin and Russia.

The White House attempted to enlist the FBI, the CIA Director Pompeo, and top Republicans on the House and Senate intel committees to help push back against The New York Times reporting on Trump's ties to Russia.

There is DEVIN NUNES—I don't need to talk about him. He issued a joint statement with ADAM SCHIFF, a joint statement in January announcing that the scope of their investigation would include links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns.

FBI Director James Comey announced on March 20, during testimony before the House Intelligence Committee, that the FBI is investigating whether members of President Trump's campaign colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 election.

DEVIN NUNES announced to the press that members of Trump's transition team were under incidental surveillance by U.S. intelligence agencies

after the election and briefed President Trump on March 22. However, he did not brief ADAM SCHIFF or other House Intelligence Committee members, and he never revealed his source. DEVIN NUNES has clearly compromised the investigation and can no longer be trusted to lead it.

In conclusion, Congress must create a comprehensive, independent, bipartisan commission to expose the full truth of Trump's ties to Russia. I believe that, once we have fully investigated Trump's Kremlin Klan, we will find that there was collusion between President Trump and Russia to violate the integrity of our elections.

At that point, the Republicans in Congress will have no choice but to put country ahead of party. I say impeach Donald Trump.

I thank you so much, as we witness what attempts to be a coverup now about all of this.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Ms. WATERS for her zealous work on behalf of her constituents and all Americans.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), our distinguished colleague, who is a leading member of the House Judiciary Committee.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, there is an obvious cancer at the heart of the credibility, perhaps even of the legitimacy, of the Trump administration. That cancer consists of questions pertaining to the relationship of this administration with Russia.

We know that the Russians intervened in the last election with the goal of advantaging Trump's campaign over Hillary Clinton. We know that there were numerous Trump campaign transition team and administration officials in contact with the Russians—prior to, during, and after the campaign.

We know that there is a pattern of these individuals at first denying such contacts but later, after being forced to come clean, admitting them.

Examples to date include: former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, and Roger Stone, who admitted that he was in contact with Guccifer 2.0, the hacker that the CIA says is a Russian front for military intelligence.

We know that the Attorney General gave false testimony, deliberate or otherwise, to the Senate regarding meetings with Russian officials.

We know that President Trump has financial ties with Russia. Although he denies it, we now know that there are large Russian investments in The Trump Organization. The President's son, Donald Trump, Jr., said a few years ago that money was "flowing in" from Russia. That obviously can have a major influence on the President and on the decisions of his administration.

We know that there was a change in the Republican platform dealing with Ukraine to favor Russia, a change that was engineered by the Trump campaign.

We even know who in the Trump campaign gave the instruction to make this change.

We know that there is an ongoing criminal investigation by the FBI of possible collusion by the Trump campaign in the admitted Russian intervention in the attempt by Russia to subvert the 2016 Presidential campaign.

Knowing all this, it is impossible to ignore or to dismiss questions concerning the credibility of the administration, and, certainly, we must ask questions regarding its legitimacy as well, if there is persuasive evidence that crimes were committed in colluding with Russia to subvert the election.

□ 1730

We have a duty to resolve this question, to get answers, to pursue the truth, and to remove any cancer that we may find.

A few weeks ago, the Judiciary Committee considered a resolution of inquiry that I introduced dealing with a number of issues, including the President's conflicts of interests, his possible violations of the Constitution's Emoluments Clause, and any information about possible criminal or counterintelligence investigations related to the President and/or his associates. Yet, to date, the Republicans have opposed our amendments and voted down our resolutions of inquiry, in effect, abdicating their constitutional obligation to provide oversight and enforce the law.

Now we have the spectacle of the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee conducting an obvious coverup, failing to share important information with members of the committee—information, I would add, that revealed President Trump's allegations against former President Obama as completely false—while inappropriately briefing people at the White House on the committee's investigation, the very same people who are the subjects of the investigation.

This is so absurd, so inappropriate, and beyond belief that it is tough to accept the reality of the situation. Sadly, this isn't a television drama we can turn off or walk away from. The integrity of our democratic system of government is at stake.

What we need is honesty. The American people must have faith in the integrity of our government, and it is our job to ensure it. It is time for answers.

If there is no evidence of misconduct, then we should move on. But if the truth reveals a conspiracy, if there is proof of criminal conduct, Donald Trump must be held accountable, and the people around him must be held accountable, and we must act.

There is no superior way to get at the truth and to fulfill our duty to the people of this country than to have an independent investigatory commission established beyond any partisan control. So I urge that that be done so that the people of this country can

have confidence once again in their government.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from Washington State (Ms. JAYAPAL), who is the co-convenor of the Progressive Caucus Special Order along with me.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. RASKIN of Maryland, for his incredible leadership and for the opportunity to continue to lead the Special Order hour for the Progressive Caucus here every week. And every week we do try to pick a different topic.

For those of you in the audience, we pick a different topic, and this evening that topic is the ties to Russia of this administration.

Yesterday, Sean Spicer told veteran White House correspondent April Ryan that she was "going to have to take 'no' for an answer" when she asked him about the President's collusion with Russia.

Well, Mr. Spicer, we are here to tell you that we will not just take "no" for an answer. We are not going to sit back and believe everything that is coming out from the White House when there is mounting evidence that President Trump's campaign may have colluded with Russia to tip the election in his favor.

And for those of you who saw the Judiciary Committee today, we had a resolution of inquiry from Representative HAKEEM JEFFRIES and TED LIEU about this very issue in relation to Attorney General Jeff Sessions and his ties to Russia.

Let's not forget that President Trump's former national security adviser and campaign adviser only lasted a record-setting 24 days in the role because he blatantly lied about meeting with Russia's Ambassador, Sergey Kislyak, during the campaign.

So what other ties to Russia have been confirmed?

There are so many of these ties that I thought it might be helpful to have a diagram and to really show exactly what the connections have been between top Trump officials during the campaign who are now the same officials that are serving in the White House and are the President's close and personal confidants. The fact that a diagram is even necessary tells us something.

Let's start at the top with the President himself.

President Trump has a long history with Russia. His first trip to Moscow was actually 30 years ago. He went to explore potential real estate opportunities. His relationship with the country has clearly grown.

In the late 1990s, Trump started banking with Deutsche Bank, which has since been investigated for funneling Russian money offshore.

Soon after that, he linked up with a Russian company called the Bayrock Group, which has ties to the Mafia and to criminal interests in Russia. Their partnership was integral to helping to

expand The Trump Organization to new heights, with properties springing up across the country.

His ties to Russia only grew deeper. In the late 2000s, several Russian businessmen bought properties from The Trump Organization, netting them hundreds of millions of dollars in profit.

Now, let's fast-forward to 2016 when then-candidate Trump was building his team. He brought on Carter Page, who is now under investigation for communicating with Russian officials. And, in fact, it was the Trump campaign's former manager, Corey Lewandowski, who gave Carter Page the green light to visit Moscow just last July. A couple of weeks later, Mr. Page met with Sergey Kislyak, but he said that he will not reveal the details of that conversation to the public.

This is a very important, consistent fact that we see. Our resolution of inquiry today that we debated in the Judiciary Committee was about the release of information so that we understand what is going on. Without any accusations, what we are trying to say is let us investigate what these ties are, what the conversations were, and let us determine, in an independent, bipartisan way, let us determine that there has not been collusion, and let us make sure that there is no foreign government that is affecting our democracy.

So various members of Trump's team met with Russian officials during the campaign. But Attorney General Jeff Sessions didn't just meet with officials, he lied about meeting with officials during his confirmation hearing.

And again, the top prosecutor in the United States of America lied under oath during a confirmation hearing. This cannot be ignored.

Once again, we are not saying don't have conversations, but don't lie about them. Don't make us wonder what happened during those conversations. How do we trust the Attorney General of the United States of America to fairly and impartially preside if he has shown that he is willing to make false statements just to get the job?

He is not the only high-level Trump official who has been blatantly dishonest with the American people. Michael Flynn, the former national security adviser, was put in place by President Trump and resigned due to the shady backdoor dealings that put him in the pocket of Russian officials. He was paid \$45,000 to attend a state-sponsored gala dinner and sit at the table of Vladimir Putin.

These connections are more than just mere coincidence.

And in addition to Flynn, Page, and Sessions, there are several others who have been implicated: Trump's former campaign manager, Paul Manafort; former campaign adviser, Roger Stone; his personal lawyer—all of these folks are up here—his personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, are all under investigation for their connections to Russia.

And now President Trump's son-in-law, who has become one of his top advisers, is under investigation as well for his actions during the campaign.

Not only did Jared Kushner meet with Ambassador Kislyak, he met with the Russian bankers as well. And the White House has claimed that the meetings were "diplomatic," but it is deeply troubling that one of the bankers that he met with was Sergey Gorkov.

I want to be clear about who this person is. He is a graduate of the Russian Academy of the Federal Security Service, which is an academy that is tasked with training individuals to become members of Russia's security and intelligence forces. He is now the chairman of the Vnesheconombank, and he was appointed by Putin, himself. This is not a mom-and-pop bank. This is a state-owned corporation that has been under sanctions by the United States for the past 3 years. And that is a big deal.

Jared Kushner, whose family is worth nearly \$2 billion, has real estate interests around the world, sat down, allegedly under the auspices of his role with the President, to chat with this owner of the bank. A spokesperson for the Kremlin has alleged that this meeting was "absolutely the bank's prerogative" and that the Russian Government was unaware of the meeting.

We need more information to know what happened in that meeting because, otherwise, where there is smoke, we think there is fire. So we need to have the information so that we can actually determine what is happening with these connections because, if somebody from the Trump campaign and the Trump administration is meeting with Russian officials and they don't want to tell us why or what is discussed, then we have to start wondering whether the conversations are in the interest of the American people or in the interest of the Russian Government.

We also have Rex Tillerson, President Trump's Secretary of State, who has strong business ties to Russia and was awarded the Order of Friendship from Vladimir Putin in 2013. This is the highest honor that Russia can bestow on noncitizens. Just 2 years prior, Tillerson had struck a massive \$500 billion oil deal with the Russian Government.

Now, we could go on and on with this, but what is important for the American people to understand is that we have expectations that the President of the United States and that his Cabinet are working in the interests of the American people.

We have expectations that, if a deal is struck, it is not for the benefit of some other country or for the personal benefit of any individual in office, but that it is for the public's benefit. And if a deal is struck that takes benefit away from the public in order to give it to a foreign government or to an individual personal interest of our govern-

ment, then that is an enormous disservice to our democracy, and, of course, there are constitutional ramifications for all of this.

This administration has tried to tell us that the conversations between Trump's advisers and high-level Russian businessmen and officials were about diplomacy. Yet this shroud of secrecy that continues every time we try to get information, every time we try to make sure that there is an independent, bipartisan investigation, the shroud of secrecy continues, and it begs the question: If this is really about advocating for the interests of the American people and not the Russian Government or the pocketbooks of Cabinet members, then why the secrecy? What is there to hide?

We don't understand that. If there is nothing to hide, then let us have the information. There have been plenty of requests to do that in a classified way in case there is some information that is classified.

But why are the President's campaign advisers and officials denying under oath that they have communicated with Russia only then to be forced to walk back their statements or recuse themselves, as Jeff Sessions had to do, or to even resign?

Foreign policy is key to American interests, but these backroom conversations and subsequent lies are doing nothing to make the American people feel confident in an administration that is supposed to represent them. It is clear that there is a strong tie here that was only strengthened during the campaign.

But let's be very clear about what is the connective tissue in all of this, in all of these lines that go back and forth. What is the connective tissue that connects all of this? It is money.

How did we get to this point?

Of course, we remember the hacking of the election that occurred last year. It is in the process of being investigated, even though the chairman of the Intelligence Committee feels that his first duty is to the President and not to the members of the committee.

But last year, President Trump defended Vladimir Putin by placing the blame on the Democratic National Committee to distract the American people; and then, in July, he outright urged Russia to hack Hillary Clinton's emails, saying: "Russia, if you are listening, I hope you are able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing."

In December, a CIA assessment concluded that Russia was trying to help then-candidate Trump win the election. Why? Because they know that they have an ally in President Trump. They have someone who is willing to do business with them, even if it may not be in the best interests of the American people. They know that they are well connected at every level of his administration.

And let's be clear about who we are talking about with Mr. Putin. This is a

dictator, a human rights abuser, somebody whom Republicans and Democrats, alike, have said we cannot be associated with.

□ 1745

You have heard of "The Manchurian Candidate." In the most recent election, we may have ended up with the Kremlin candidate, and the script truly writes itself.

We were hoping to have a chance to get to the bottom of this, as I said. We were hoping to have a chance to get to the bottom of this in a hearing in the House Intelligence Committee, but we never got the chance.

Last Tuesday, Representative NUNES went to the secret briefing in a National Security Council facility, and what he found apparently wasn't good for the President because he ran over there to tell the President. Instead of doing his duty and reporting the information to the House Intelligence Committee, he went straight to the White House with his findings. And he is supposed to be chairing an investigation into what happened, not being the runner for information to the President.

After briefing President Trump, Representative NUNES canceled the hearing, denying Americans the opportunity to hear from former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates. And Ranking Member JIM HIMES was right when he said that "the Monday hearing last week was, I'm sure, not to the White House's liking."

He went on to say: "Since Monday, I'm sorry to say, the chairman," Chairman NUNES, "has ceased to be the chairman of an investigative committee and has been running interference for the Trump White House."

This is absolutely unacceptable. The fact that we are questioning whether or not several members of the President's Cabinet—not just one, not even just two, but several members of the President's Cabinet, including the President, himself—are guilty of collusion with a foreign government is a downright outrage.

In my home district, the Seventh District of Washington State, I have been receiving numerous calls, hundreds of calls from constituents since day one, saying: How can this be happening in this democracy? How is this possible in America? How do we make sure that our government is representing us and not a foreign entity?

Why is it that somebody would lie about whether or not they had a conversation with the Russian Government if there was nothing to hide?

People are losing faith in the United States Government. It is a crisis of democracy when people can't trust that their government is actually trying to get to the bottom of what is going on and actually representing the interests of the American people.

The White House may have a friend in Representative NUNES, but I want the American people to know that they have a friend in us. We won't back

down on our demands. Representative NUNES should recuse himself from this investigation. There is no way we can expect a full and impartial investigation after what has just occurred.

This should not be a partisan issue. Every Member of Congress, Republican and Democrat, should be demanding to know the facts. We are not making judgments. We want to know the facts. If there are facts that we don't know that say, no, there were very legitimate conversations, there was no collusion, then we are done. Why tie up the airwaves with this?

So tonight, as we think about where we are in this debate and we think about the fact that, for 3 months, this administration has been under the shadow of secrecy, under the shadow of mistrust from the American people, there is a very easy way to clear all of the names of the people who are on this list, including the President of the United States, and that is to ensure that we have an independent investigation; to ensure that Representative NUNES recuses himself and steps down as the chair of the Intelligence Committee, given what has happened; and to ensure that, at the end of the day, we remember that the Government of the United States of America, the President of the United States of America, the Congress of the United States of America, our one duty is to represent the people of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) for his leadership.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman JAYAPAL for her fantastic leadership for the people of Washington in the city of Washington and her zealous advocacy for all of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, let me try to recap some of the themes that we have brought up this evening and talk about what is really at stake here. But I want to start with some good news, because there was really some great news out of Russia on Sunday, where more than 75,000 people across the country braved the tyranny and despotism of their government to go out into the streets to express their commitment to democracy, human rights, and against corruption.

They were focused very specifically on some of the oligarchs who surround Vladimir Putin. One of them, Prime Minister Medvedev, it has just been learned, has amassed more than \$1 billion, as a public servant, in mansions, in vineyards in Italy, in fancy cars, in jewelry—\$1 billion. And the people of Russia are up in arms about the corruption, the kleptocracy, the stealing from the Russian people, which is increasingly impoverished by the imperial designs and the corrupt practices of Putin and his team.

So tens of thousands of people went into the streets to protest. These are brave people, because you are talking about an authoritarian government

there, a dictator, a despot, someone who orders out for the assassination of his political enemies. Many of them were arrested. Hundreds of them were arrested in Moscow, and some of them are still in jail right now.

Mr. Speaker, we should be on the side of the protesters in Russia. That is who we are as America. We are a nation conceived in revolutionary insurgency against corruption, against monarchy, against dictators and autocrats and theocrats and kleptocrats who steal from the people. That is who we are.

We should be meeting with them. We should be meeting with the human rights activists. We should be meeting with the anticorruption marchers who are putting themselves on the front lines of history. We should be meeting with the dissenters and the critics of Vladimir Putin and the oligarchs and big business kleptocrats who surround him. But, instead, our government has aligned with Putin himself, with the insiders in Russia. That is totally antithetical to the design of America, when you think about it.

Mr. Speaker, we have the great good fortune to go to work every day surrounded by portraits of people who built this country, like George Washington, who is right over there. We have got portraits of Thomas Jefferson. We have got portraits of Frederick Douglass. We have got portraits of Abraham Lincoln, who actually served in this body and, when he was here, spent a lot of his time railing about a war that was concocted with lies by President James Polk, the Mexican War.

But Lincoln knew how delicate and precious and precarious an enterprise democracy is. In the Gettysburg Address, he posed the question of how long government of the people, by the people, and for the people can last. Will it perish from the Earth? And he put the question to the people because, he said, it is up to us.

Democracy is a rarity in human history. Democracy is not the norm. That is why America is a miraculous experiment on Earth. If you don't do anything, you are going to end up with dictators and despots and kleptocrats who steal from their own people, like Vladimir Putin.

But America started a different way. The first three words of our Constitution are "We, the people." We, the people; we flipped the whole design. Before that, the whole theory was that the king had the power, and the king got power directly from God; and everybody was a subject of the king, and everybody served the king.

Our Founders had the vision, in that outburst of enlightenment and enthusiasm, to say, no, we are going to try something different:

We are going to start a government based on we, the people, and we are going to separate church and state; and we are not going to dictate to people their religious worship, and we are not

going to dictate to people their political beliefs. There is going to be freedom of thought and freedom of speech.

We don't trust the collapse of all powers into one, which Madison said was the very definition of tyranny. We are going to separate powers. The legislature, Congress, will come first, Article I. It will represent the people. But then we are going to have someone else execute the laws of the people, faithfully execute the laws of the people. That will be the President. And when there are disputes, they will be adjudicated in a third branch of government, by the Supreme Court, to figure it out.

But we are going to separate the powers, because when one guy has got all the power, it endangers the freedoms and the liberties of everybody else. We even said, even though our President is limited by the separation of powers, we are going to make sure that the President and also the Members of Congress will have an undivided, zealous loyalty only to the American people.

Article I, section 9 says we cannot accept presents, emoluments, which are any kind of payments, offices, or titles from foreign princes, foreign kings, or foreign states, period. We can't accept them without the approval of Congress. It doesn't go.

There were all kinds of powers that were sending spies and saboteurs to Washington, when the country first began, to try to pay off elected officials, but our Founders had the vision to say: No, we are not going to accept that. We are not going to allow payments and bribes and fancy presents being given to our elected officials.

So one government, separated powers, based on public integrity, honesty, and devotion to the people. That is the model here.

Now, we should be on the side of democratic movements all over the Earth, like the people who assembled in Moscow on Sunday, who assembled in Siberia on Sunday. There were marchers even there. It was like our Women's March. It took place all over the country. Those are our people. We should be on the side of the people who are trying to overthrow the despotism in Russia.

But look what is happening. Tyranny and authoritarianism are on the march all over the world. Russia is the headquarters of it, but you can find it everywhere you look:

Philippines, a madman dictator who thinks he has the power to send his agents out to go and shoot people on the street because they look like they are a drug dealer and brags about it, Duterte;

Hungary, another favorite of Vladimir Putin, Mr. Orban, who is cracking down on press freedom, on human rights in his country;

Iran, authoritarian, theocratic state; people being thrown in jail for blasphemy, for heresy, for apostasy, for religious offenses;

Saudi Arabia, fomenting racist, anti-Semitic propaganda and sending it out, oppressing people based on religion, not even allowing women to drive in their society.

Everywhere you turn, tyranny, despotism on the march.

And Mr. Putin has a plan. How do we know it? Do we know it from the Democratic Caucus or the Republican Conference? No. We know it from our intelligence agencies, from the FBI, the CIA, the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Seventeen of America's intelligence agencies came back with a report, and they said Vladimir Putin has a plan to continue to destabilize and undermine liberal democracy all over the world.

Brexit was part of it. The intervention in our election was part of it. They are going after France, where they want the rightwing, ultra nationalist, anti-immigrant campaign of Marine Le Pen to triumph in France. They are trying to do it in Germany, which is now the strongest outpost of liberal democracy left on Earth, as of yet, uncontaminated by the penetration of Russian intelligence and Putin's agents.

But what did they do to us? What is this all about?

Well, we had an election in 2016. The sovereign people of America had an election. Now, unfortunately, we are still using the electoral college, which is antiquated and obsolescent. There is a movement to change it afoot to the national popular vote. But be that as it may, that is our system. We haven't reformed it yet. It is our system. It is our elections here in America. But the electoral college makes it more vulnerable because you just have to intervene in a handful of States in order to sway the vote.

What did Putin do? Again, we know this. I am not making this up. We know this from our intelligence agencies. If you don't believe me, you go to your computer and you just look up the intelligence agency report on Russian interference and espionage and sabotage in our 2016 election.

And what did they do?

They spied on different Democratic institutions, like the Democratic National Committee, and they spied on particular people.

They engaged in not just cyber espionage, but cyber sabotage.

They orchestrated a series of leaks which dominated election coverage in the United States for several weeks.

They orchestrated a campaign of fake news and propaganda in order to undermine Hillary Clinton, who was reviled—and is reviled, presumably—by Vladimir Putin because she challenged him, and she challenged the human rights situation in Russia and the involvement of Russia with various dictators in other parts of the world. So they interfered in our election.

When I first got to Congress, that was still being disputed. When we tried to talk about this, it was being said,

well, there is no evidence that Russia did this. Well, guess what? The evidence is replete. It is decisive. It is determinative.

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Now we are not hearing from our friends on the other side: Well, Russia didn't do this.

Now they are saying something different: Well, Russia may have done that. It may have been this massive, orchestrated campaign to undermine and subvert our elections, but there is no proof that that was actual collusion by the Trump campaign.

About that, I want to say two things. Number one, it shouldn't make any difference. Let's say nobody in the Trump campaign knew anybody in Russia and never heard of Vladimir Putin. It would make no difference because we should still view this as a radical threat to the political sovereignty of the American people.

But the second answer is even more important. As all of my colleagues were pointing out before, every day we get more evidence not just of contacts and connections, but actual collaboration and cooperation between people in the Trump campaign, the Trump family, and the Trump universe with Vladimir Putin and his closest agents and assets throughout Russia and around the world.

Let's just recap a few of those: former national security adviser Michael Flynn was forced to resign, or I guess he was fired by President Trump after he failed to disclose the scope of his contacts with Russians, including Ambassador Kislyak. He was paid more than \$33,000 in 2015 by Russian-funded propaganda media, and the full extent of his relationship to the Russians is still being investigated.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions was forced to recuse himself from this whole matter because he met several times with Ambassador Kislyak, who has been described as Russia's top spy in America during the 2016 election. Then—I will speak charitably here—he misled his own colleagues in the Senate about it at his Senate confirmation hearing raising the issue and then denying that he had had any contact with the Russians at all.

Senior adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner met with the Russian Ambassador at Trump Tower a few months ago in December of 2016. We have got former Trump campaign foreign policy adviser Carter Page, who has admitted that he met with the Russian Ambassador and other Russians in Cleveland at the Republican National Convention and met with managers from Rosneft, the Russian-owned oil company. He himself owns shares of a Russian energy company called Gazprom.

Roger Stone, Trump's longtime buddy and political adviser, was working with WikiLeaks, which published documents during the election based on information divulged because of Russian interference and espionage that



tilted the scales again in favor of Trump in the campaign, and he hosted a series on the Russian propaganda network.

Paul Manafort, Trump's campaign manager for 6 months, was an adviser to Ukrainian oligarchs who got sweetheart business deals from Putin's associates. He was also a business partner of Russian oligarchs close to Putin. He resigned in August of last year after reports surfaced that suggested that he had received \$12.7 million from Ukraine's pro-Russia former president Viktor Yanukovich. He was on the payroll for \$10 million, it has just come out, in order to promote the Russian perspective and Putin's propaganda in Washington, D.C., and throughout the United States in order to change the course of U.S. politics.

Now, I am sorry to put these out there as a bunch of clues. I wish we had a coherent story to tell. We don't, because what we need is a comprehensive 9/11-style independent investigation to figure out what precisely happened. In America you are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Nobody is putting any of these people in jail, but it has come out, despite their best efforts in some cases, that they are up to their necks in the Russian connection.

What does that mean for American democracy?

What we know is there was a massive independent expenditure in 2006. That is what we call it under our FEC law when you go out and spend money to try to destroy one candidate and help another. There was a massive foreign independent expenditure orchestrated by Vladimir Putin.

The question is: Was it, in FEC terms, a coordinated expenditure? That is, did the Trump team actively work with them?

As we are saying, there are lots of clues that suggest it is so. I am not willing to say that they were definitely in cahoots with them. I am not willing to say that they were necessarily collaborating the election. But the evidence accumulates every single day that points in that direction.

Now every day in Washington, D.C., what we are doing is running around because there is a coverup that has been unfolding. Today, of course, we are dealing with a resolution in the House Judiciary Committee to try to get to the bottom of what Chairman NUNES of the House Intelligence Committee actually did when he ran over to the White House with some information that he had about Trump apparently being picked up incidentally in conversations that were being tapped by the American intelligence community with foreign operatives. Again, it is shadowy because we don't know the whole thing. But what we do know is that Chairman NUNES went to the White House to tell President Trump or his deputies before he told anybody here in Congress.

Now, we have been saying from the beginning we want an independent, ob-

jective 9/11-style commission—no Democratic politicians, no Republican politicians, and no elected officials. Let's agree on gifted statesmen and stateswomen who can really get to the bottom of this if we care about the truth. Their answer has been: No, we have got the Intelligence Committee to do it instead.

But now what we have got is the Intelligence Committee chair traveling back and forth to the White House, spilling the beans, which undermines everybody's confidence in the integrity of the investigation that is taking place into the Russian connection and what actually happened in the 2016 election.

Mr. Speaker, in the American system of government, elected officials have to have undivided loyalty to the American people. That is why we have got the Emoluments Clause: no presents, no emoluments, no offices, and no titles from foreign governments. That is why we swear an oath to the Constitution of the United States of America. Each one of us who has the great honor and privilege of coming to Washington, D.C., to represent the people swear an oath to our Constitution and to our people.

We are not a country, like so many, that are defined by one religion. We are not defined by one race. We are not defined by one ethnicity. We are not defined by one political party. We are not defined by one political ideology. We are defined by one Constitution. That is what unifies us as Americans. We must be constitutional patriots here and insist upon our constitutional values and the rule of law for democracy to be meaningful in the 21st century.

There is a new model of tyrannical government traveling all over the world, and all the bullies and despots have found each other. They are in league together. They want government as a moneymaking operation. They want government as a moneymaking operation for private elites in their country, whether it is in Russia or the Philippines or Saudi Arabia. Sad to say, we are starting to see the development of that right here in the United States of America.

So we have the opportunity and we have the responsibility to exercise our rights as citizens under the First Amendment and to exercise our privileges as Members of Congress under the speech or debate clause to speak up against the march of tyranny all over the Earth. We have got an obligation to resist the corruption—the same corruption that the people in Russia were marching against on Sunday. We must demand real answers about what took place in our Presidential election in 2016. The intelligence agencies warned us that what happened in 2016 was a dress rehearsal for what is going to happen the next time and the time after that.

I want to say something about the geopolitics of this. Think about it for a second:

Who has got the strongest economy on Earth?

We do, the freest, the original democracy. We have got the strongest economy.

Who has got the strongest military?

We do.

Russia can't come close. But the way I understand what happened in 2016 was that Vladimir Putin—who is not an honest man, but he is a clever man—decided that this was a moment of opportunity for Russia. He is the former chief of the KGB. Let's not forget that. He is the guy who said that the greatest catastrophe of the 20th century was the collapse of the Soviet Union. He is an irredentist imperialist who wants to go back and reconstruct the Russian empire.

But what he saw was an opportunity, which is that today the whole world is linked, and it is linked by the internet. He created something that I think of as a Manhattan Project for military conquest and defeat of the liberal democracies in the 21st century.

He set about to figure out this question: How can we undermine and subvert the liberal democracies?

These are open societies. America is an open society. We pride ourselves on the First Amendment, on freedom of speech, and on free dialogue and discussion.

So he said to himself: How can I subvert and undermine that?

The answer became very clear: to create—really on the cheap, because compared to military might, this is pennies on the dollar—he was going to create an internet army, in effect, to try to undermine and subvert our democracy with fake news, with propaganda, and with paid trolls to get information out to try to destroy the reputations of opposition politicians and to try to promote the parties that he viewed as “within his camp.”

Guess what?

It still is going on today. It is still happening. We are not talking about ancient history. We are talking about an ongoing project. That is why I am proud to be a member of the minority caucus here, the Democratic Party caucus, which is insisting that we create an independent, objective, neutral, 9/11-style commission to investigate the Russian connection and what happened with the attack on American democracy in 2016.

We have got to get to the bottom of it. Two-thirds of the American people in public opinion polls say that they support such a commission. There is nobody who would oppose it except for somebody who has got something to hide. But for the rest of us, we have every reason to get to the bottom of this plot to destroy our election in 2016, and we have every reason to defend this great constitutional democracy with everything we have got.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ARRINGTON). Members are reminded to

refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

**CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SIGNIFICANT MALICIOUS CYBER-ENABLED ACTIVITIES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-26)**

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13694 of April 1, 2015, is to continue in effect beyond April 1, 2017.

Significant malicious cyber-enabled activities originating from, or directed by persons located, in whole or in substantial part, outside the United States, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13694 with respect to significant malicious cyber-enabled activities.

DONALD J. TRUMP.  
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 29, 2017.

**JOINT RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT**

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on March 27, 2017, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following joint resolutions:

H.J. Res. 83. Disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to "Clarification of Employer's Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain an Accurate Record of Each Recordable Injury and Illness".

H.J. Res. 69. Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to "Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska".

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 15 minutes

p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 30, 2017, at 9 a.m.

**EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.**

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

932. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Wendy M. Masiello, United States Air Force, and her advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1370(c)(1); Public Law 96-513, Sec. 112 (as amended by Public Law 104-106, Sec. 502(b)); (110 Stat. 293); to the Committee on Armed Services.

933. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Christopher C. Bogdan, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1370(c)(1); Public Law 96-513, Sec. 112 (as amended by Public Law 104-106, Sec. 502(b)); (110 Stat. 293); to the Committee on Armed Services.

934. A letter from the Principal Director, Force Resiliency, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report for Fiscal Year 2018, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 10541(a); Public Law 101-510, Sec. 1483(a) (as amended by Public Law 112-81, Sec. 1070); (125 Stat. 1592); to the Committee on Armed Services.

935. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Kevin W. Mangum, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1370(c)(1); Public Law 96-513, Sec. 112 (as amended by Public Law 104-106, Sec. 502(b)); (110 Stat. 293); to the Committee on Armed Services.

936. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's Major final rule — Amendment to Securities Transaction Settlement Cycle [Release No.: 34-80295; File No.: S7-22-16] (RIN: 3235-AL86) received March 28, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

937. A letter from the Chief, Pricing Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Comprehensive Review of the Part 32 Uniform System of Accounts [WC Docket No.: 14-130]; Jurisdictional Separations and Referral to the Federal-State Joint Board [CC Docket No.: 80-286] received March 28, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

938. A letter from the Executive Secretary, United States Agency for International Development, transmitting twenty-one notifications of a federal vacancy and designation of acting officer, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

939. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Employee Consents (Rev. Proc. 2017-28) received March 27, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS**

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 369. A bill to eliminate the sunset of the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes, with an amendment (Rept. 115-65). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. CHAFFETZ: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 194. A bill to ensure the effective processing of mail by Federal agencies, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-66). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. CHAFFETZ: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 657. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend certain protections against prohibited personnel practices, and for other purposes, with an amendment (Rept. 115-67). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. CHAFFETZ: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 679. A bill to amend title 41, United States Code, to improve the manner in which Federal contracts for design and construction services are awarded, to prohibit the use of reverse auctions for design and construction services procurements, and for other purposes; with amendments (Rept. 115-68). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. CHAFFETZ: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Authorization and Oversight Plans for all House Committees (Rept. 115-69). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 1219. A bill to amend the Investment Company Act of 1940 to expand the investor limitation for qualifying venture capital funds under an exemption from the definition of an investment company (Rept. 115-70). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 1343. A bill to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise its rules so as to increase the threshold amount for requiring issuers to provide certain disclosures relating to compensatory benefit plans (Rept. 115-71). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

**PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS**

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. KILMER (for himself and Mr. FARENTHOLD):

H.R. 1770. A bill to expand the Government's use and administration of data to facilitate transparency, effective governance, and innovation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. JONES, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, and Mr. GAETZ):

H.R. 1771. A bill to improve the organization of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to ensure the accuracy of health care data used by the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Appropriations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each